

ER-85-373

**Office of Legislative Liaison
Routing Slip**

TO:

	ACTION	INFO
1. D/OLL		X
3. DD/OLL		X
3. Admin Officer		
4. Liaison		X
5. Legislation		X
6.		X
7.		X
8.		X
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10.		

SUSPENSE

Date

Action Officer:

→ MGO

Remarks:

1-25-85

Name/Date

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP**

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI		X		
3	EXDIR		X		
4	D/ICS		X		
5	DDI		X		
6	DDA		X		
7	DDO		X		
8	DDS&T		X		
9	Chm/NIC		X		
10	GC		X		
11	IG		X		
12	Compt		X		
13	D/Pers				
14	D/OLL		X		
15	D/PAO		X		
16	SA/IA				
17	AO/DCI				
18	C/IPD/OIS				
19	NI0/LA		X		
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21					
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SUSPENSE

Date

Remarks

STAT

Executive Secretary

25 Jan 85
Date

3637 (10-81)

Executive Registry

85- 373

President Reagan's Speech to Western Hemisphere Democratic Leaders--January 24, 1985, Press Guidance

Record

This morning the President spoke to a group of Western Hemisphere legislative leaders from 21 democracies and reaffirmed his three mutually reinforcing policy purposes in Latin America and gave examples of US actions under each:

- (1) encouragement of democracy;
- (2) efforts to improve living conditions and the economies;
- (3) helping friendly governments defend themselves against Soviet bloc, Cuban/Nicaraguan-sponsored subversion.

Essentially all elements of the speech repeated statements the President has made in his many previous speeches on Latin America including his May 8, 1984 speech to the Council of the Americas (where he gave an overview of his policy in Latin America), his May 9, 1984 speech on Central America delivered on national television and his December 4, 1984 welcoming statement to President Lusinchi of Venezuela.

Q: Support for Nicaraguan freedom fighters and the right of self-defense under international law--a new argument?

A: Note the President was speaking generally about any countries which might be supporting the freedom fighters; he was not speaking specifically about the US. The two sentences on this in the January 24, 1985 speech were as follows:

"The subversion we're talking about violates international law; the Organization of American States, in the past, has enacted sanctions against Cuba for such aggression, the Sandinistas have been attacking their neighbors through armed subversion since August of 1979. Counteracting this by supporting Nicaraguan freedom fighters is essentially acting in self-defense and is certainly consistent with the United Nations and OAS charter provisions for individual and collective security."

Recall that in his May 9, 1984 speech on national television the President said "the issue is our effort to promote democracy and economic well-being in the face of Cuban and economic aggression aided and abetted by the Soviet Union...if the communists can start war against the people of El Salvador,...then El Salvador and its friends are surely justified in defending themselves by blocking the flow of arms. If the Soviet Union can aid and abet subversion in our hemisphere, then the US has a legal right and a moral duty to help resist it." (the President, May 9, 1984)



Both the UN and the OAS charter provide that in the case of aggression by one state, member nations retain the right to exercise measures of individual or collective self-defense in the absence of definitive actions by either the UN or the OAS to halt the initial aggression. The President is saying that the test of legitimacy is which is the defending side, and he concludes that Nicaragua is the initiator of the aggression against its neighbors through armed subversion which began in August 1979.

Since 1959, the OAS has sanctioned Castro, Cuba a number of times for its export of subversion, which the OAS has considered a form of armed aggression. For example, in 1964, the 9th Meeting of Consultation of the OAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs established, among its conclusions, that "the Republic of Venezuela has been the target of a series of actions sponsored and directed by the Government of Cuba openly intended to subvert Venezuelan institutions and to overthrow the democratic government of Venezuela through terrorism, sabotage, assault and guerrilla warfare and that the aforementioned acts, like all acts of intervention and aggression, conflict with the principles and aims of the inter-American system (and therefore) resolves to declare that the acts verified by the investigating committee are considered an aggression and an intervention on the part of the Government of Cuba in the internal affairs of Venezuela which affect all the member states" (of the OAS).

Q: Is he trying to take the defense of the Contra aid a step further by calling it "self defense" which he did this morning?

A: The President said that support for the freedom fighters would be "essentially acting in self defense". The President has made the point before (see above), and he was referring to the right of countries that are under attack by armed subversion to take countermeasures.

Q: The Secretary of State has said, I think, categorically in public that the law is being observed and that we are not now giving aid even to third countries to pass along to the Contras. Is that the President's statement also?

A: The Secretary of State said, last Sunday, that the United States monitors aid it gives to third countries to see that it is used for the purposes intended. The Secretary of State also said that what third countries decided to do with their own resources is for their sovereign right. The President made no comment in the January 24, 1985 speech on whether the US has provided support to the Nicaraguan freedom fighters. However, you can be sure the Administration is complying with US law.

Q: How does the President feel about support for the Contras from other Latin American countries?

A: He clearly feels that any governments which may be supporting the Nicaraguan freedom fighters are acting legitimately under the right of individual, and collective self-defense. This does not mean that we are confirming that any Latin American government is providing any such assistance.

Q: I know you don't exercise control, but the President said in his statement it behooves all of us who believe in democracy ~~of~~ freedom to stand side by side with those who are fighting for it. What does that mean?

A: In his May 9, 1984 speech on national television, the President said "the US must support both the elected government of El Salvador and the democratic aspirations of the Nicaraguan people". Most of the President's speech today was about US support for the strengthening and expansion of democratic institutions in the Western Hemisphere--that is what the President meant.

Q: On the military or subversive threat in Central America--has anything improved or is the threat as big as it was four years ago?

A: There has been a great deal of progress: democratic institutions are stable in Costa Rica, there has been a peaceful return to democracy in Honduras, El Salvador has had three genuinely democratic elections, and Guatemala is in the midst of a transition back to constitutional government. However, the Soviet bloc/Cuban/Nicaraguan armed subversion against the Central American countries continues as does the Nicaraguan military buildup and its failure to implement the 1979 commitment to the OAS for real democratic elections in Nicaragua.

Q: After three years of fighting, what have the Contras accomplished?

A: First, they have made it harder for Nicaragua to export subversion. Second, they have served as a defensive barrier for the countries under subversive attack by keeping the 119,000-strong, trained Nicaraguan force in Nicaragua. Third, the freedom fighters provide encouragement to the unarmed democratic opposition groups in Nicaragua and, let us remember, the freedom fighters have said they will put down their weapons whenever there is a genuinely democratic election, as the Sandinistas promised the OAS.

Q: Are you saying the Sandinistas have the ability to expand revolution to the point where it spills over into enough Central American countries that it reaches the United States border? Is that what you're saying?

A: On national television, May 9, 1984, the President said: "As the national Bipartisan Commission on Central America ...agreed if we do nothing or if we continued to provide too little help, our choice will be a communist Central America with additional communist military bases on the mainland of this hemisphere and communist subversion spreading southward and northward. This communist subversion poses a threat that 100 million people from Panama to the open border on our south could come under the control of pro-Soviet regimes".

Q: Members of Congress have been briefed on this threat, presumably in a great deal more detail than you're able to go into here. And yet, they don't see this as an imminent danger. How does the Administration explain that?

A: Let's remember that the Congress has voted large proportions of the economic and security assistance for Central America requested by the President. We think many members of Congress do understand the danger to US national interests in the same way as the Bipartisan Commission did last year. However, some Congressmen have a difficult time understanding this subversive aggression because it is indirect, uses deceptive propaganda and occurs over a longer period of time using clandestine means. We hope to persuade a majority of Congress to provide support for all facets of the President's Central America program.

Q: What did the President mean by his reference to "a new danger we see in Central America is the support being given the Sandinistas by Col. Quadaffi's Libya, the PLO, and most recently the Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran"?

A: The "new danger" is a reference to the fact that in addition to the Soviet bloc and Cuba, which have been supporting subversion from 1959 to 1979, the Sandinista victory has led to the involvement of these new anti-Western entities. In his May 9, 1984 speech to the nation, the President said this about the PLO: "a number of Sandinistas were trained in camps supported by Cuba, the Soviet bloc, and the PLO". The President also said about Libya that Nicaragua was receiving support "also...from other parts of the terror network: the PLO have sent men and so has Libya's dictator Quadaffi". Recall that in April 1983 Libya tried to ship weapons to the Sandinistas via Brazil but these were intercepted. And on September 1, 1984 marking 15 years of the current Libyan regime, Quadaffi boasted about his aid to the Sandinistas in their war against the United States and its friends.

The travels of a high official from Iran to Nicaragua and then Cuba, in our view, suggests that the Khomeini regime intends to aid the Sandinistas, and this is disturbing.